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National Prison Braille Forum

Hyatt Regency Hotel

October 5, 2016

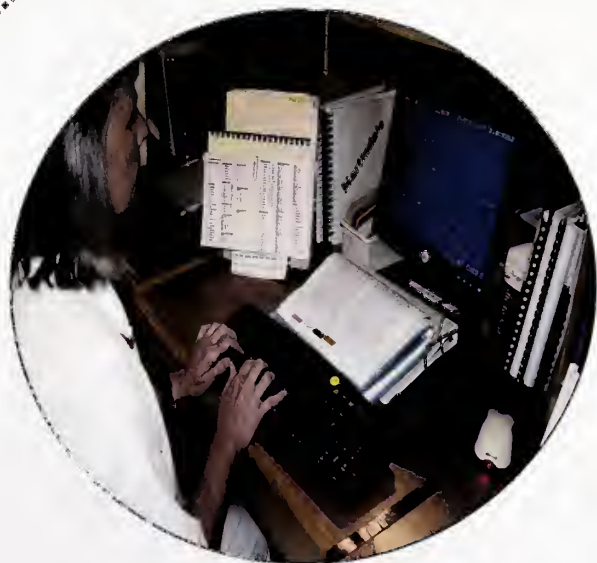


American Printing House
for the Blind, Inc.



NPBN
National Prison
Braille Network

BTAP
Braille
Transcriber
Apprentice
Program



Contestant Name: _____

N

P

B

N

Is Nemeth certified

Is a representative of BANA (Braille Authority of North America)

Host of KCI Braille Services tour

Is interested in starting a new program

Works with a program that is over 10 years old

Manages a program with more than 25 inmates

Works with a program in a private prison setting

Is rebuilding an established program

Is a graduate of BTAP (Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program)

Has a background in special education

Operates a program that won a Library of Congress award

Has worked as an independent transcriber

Holds a nearly perfect Forum attendance record

Is a librarian

Is a 2nd or 3rd generation transcriber

Manages a program in a corrections industries setting

Has earned an NLS Letter of Proficiency in UEB (Unified English Braille Code)

Runs a program where inmates use braillewriters only

Working with a program that is in the building stage

Creates tactile graphics using computer software

If Braille Were Print

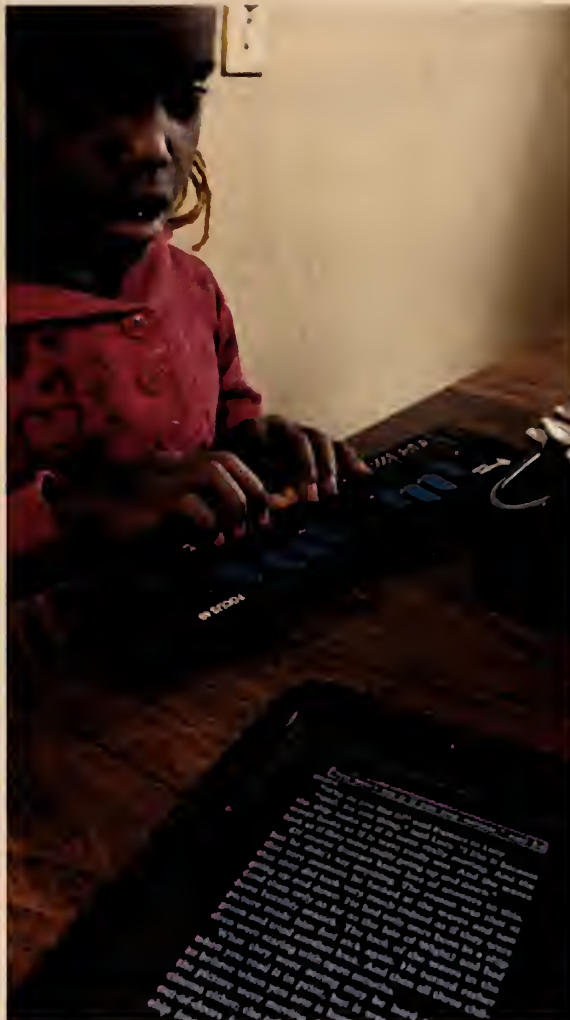
by Erin Jepsen

From the Editor: Erin Jepsen is a low-vision homeschooling mother of four elementary-age children, one blind, one low vision, and two sighted. She is passionate about education for all kids and about teaching Braille. She and her family live in Idaho.

Chatting with a friend today about a refreshable Braille display got me thinking again about the absurdities that I've seen firsthand in my daughter's classes. I've seen a silly attitude about Braille in both a local public school and in a state virtual academy. I've also heard about it from friends around the country who support one another online.

This problem comes, I think, from society's general perception that Braille is complicated, difficult, and specialized. My daughter's TVs work endlessly to provide peer enrichment, to normalize Braille, to minimize errors, and to add Braille in spaces within the school. I have tried to do the same at home. Still, in spite of our best efforts, misperceptions remain in attitudes about Braille and print.

To address some of these misperceptions for the non-Braille-reading public, I want to try an experiment. I want to reframe some of the things that students commonly hear when they are being taught Braille by imagining that they are being said to a sighted print reader. I'd like to say these things about the reading method that nearly everyone in my area uses: English print.



The Challenges of Print

Imagine a typical first- or second-grader of average intelligence who is learning to read. Keep in mind the material this learner will need to read in eighth grade. In twelfth grade. In college. On the job. Running a household.

1. It makes sense that you're having a hard time with this. It is hard to learn print.

As your hypothetical classroom teacher, I don't actually read this print stuff. Your aide took a two-week training course, and we have a reference chart here, but I really don't know how print works. It just looks like a bunch of squiggles on the paper. It uses a round symbol for both a zero and the letter o, and I'm not sure how to tell you which one is which. There is also special shorthand stuff, like spelling *with* as *w/*, and I don't know how to teach you all that.

Reading a book with writing on both sides of the page is hard for me. It doesn't matter that it's normal for you; I say it's hard, because for me, it is.

You have a special print teacher, and you'll see her for an hour or two per week. Surely that's all the extra help you'll need.

2. I'm not aware of any techniques for reading print at a usable speed.

As far as I know, print readers only read one letter at a time. I don't know any adults who read printed books. I saw someone do it once on TV, and it looked like magic. I've heard that people who read print well are either geniuses or flukes.

3. I'm sorry, but your book is loaded with typos.

The books we're giving you were transcribed by unqualified volunteers, so there are at least two typos or misprints or misspelled words for every thirty words. Just remember you're lucky to have print books at all.

Every other kid in your class gets information from illustrations, but we're going to skip those for you. They're cute, but probably they're not important.

4. Technology, schmechnology!

First of all, nobody like you uses computers or knows how to type at your age. You have plenty of time to learn that stuff later. Your job someday probably won't

require a computer. If it does, someone can give you a quick training course. For now, we're going to print your books using a dot-matrix printer. The school bought it in 1989 for our last print reader, and they don't want to buy anything new.

We're going to get you a special display screen, though. It hooks up to an iPad. It displays three words per screen. To get to the next screen, you just press this little button over here. Cool, right?

5. Reading is overrated.

Nobody these days needs to read print or write with a pencil anyway. You can just listen to audiobooks. It's a lot less work than reading, and you can dictate anything you want to write. Technology is amazing these days for people like you.

6. Nobody else reads the way you read.

In your school, no one besides you reads print. The teachers don't read it. Your friends don't read it. There is no print displayed around the halls, on the classroom walls, or in the lunchroom. Everybody reads, but nobody reads English print. Nobody here can read what you write, and nobody can write to you. Well, one of your friends learned to write to you. He thinks print is a cool secret code.

There's a sign in print by the bathroom. You say it actually says "Aathroox?"

We keep reminding you to be grateful for your printed books. The other students have thousands of books in whatever they read, and no one tells them to be grateful. But you should be grateful for the twelve books that you have. Don't forget, people went to a lot of trouble to get them for you.

You didn't do very well on the reading test last week. Your special print teacher says it was written like this: %Bgoat %Bpig %Bhorse %Bduck. I don't read print, so I don't know how it looks to you. I just grade your test the best I can.

7. You will get your books late. Always.

The school ordered the wrong reading book from the supplier, so your book is the first-grade version, not the second-grade version. It's double-spaced and uses easy vocabulary, but that's okay for you. Your life is challenging enough already, just learning to read print. You have to learn all those curves and squiggles. The capital letters are different shapes, and there are different fonts, too. You have to learn five

different shapes just for the letter A. That's hard! You don't need challenging vocabulary, too.

You're falling behind your class? Don't worry. You have a lot on your plate.

Your math book is still at the translator's shop. They say it will be here in seven months. Everyone else is going to use a math book during the next seven months, but I'll just read your math out loud to you.

Don't worry about learning to read numbers! When you get your math book, you can read the numbers all you want! Be grateful you're getting a math book in print.

8. Of course you're behind.

Kids like you, print readers of average intelligence, are always behind.

Always.

In fact, you'll likely graduate from high school with about a fourth-grade reading level. It can't be helped. It's okay, though, because kids like you don't usually want to have a career. People who read print usually get jobs sorting stuff at places like Goodwill. They pay you about \$2 an hour, but you won't notice that because of the math thing.

9. Print is just so cool!!

Print looks cool! I see it here and there, like on elevators, and it's just so neat. It's all swoopy and round, and I like to look at it. People like you must be really special to read it. I can't believe you can just walk up to a sign with words printed on it and *boom!* read what it says.

Kids who read print are so beautiful and special. They open their printed books and just go for it. Unbelievable!

10. I love the way you write print, too.

I've watched you write print. You make these marks on paper, and you actually know what they say. That special tool you use, what's it called? A pencil? It's so neat! It writes print, just like that!

I've seen you type on a special keyboard. It makes print, too, but it disturbs the class with the clicking noise, so I wish you wouldn't use it. You can use it someday when you're grown up, but not in class, okay? Just tell one of the adults what you want to write, and we'll do it for you. We'll even spell it right for you. You can practice spelling words on your special spelling tests in your special writing room on Fridays.

The Print Reader's Experience

Dear Reader, what do you think? Do you think a kid is going to learn to read in that atmosphere, with those expectations and that sort of encouragement? With that amount of support and practice?

Any TVI or homeschool mom who has tried to even things out for a Braille reader knows exactly what I'm talking about.

What do print-reading kids typically experience in school? Let's take a look.

1. *Your teacher knows English.*

If you are an English speaker, your teacher knows the language in which you're reading and writing. She or he may even know Spanish or Chinese or Dutch. She can use all the tools you are expected to use. If she can't, she is not deemed qualified to teach.

2. *Your teacher has books.*

Books in print arrive in the classroom on time before the school year begins. In nearly every school in the country, there are books for every kid in the class. The books don't come late. The teacher reads them and shows you how to read them. You have your own copy of each book you need. The teacher sends books home with you for practice. If your parents know English, they can read with you.

If there is a quote you want to read at the school assembly, you don't have to write it out for yourself first because nobody else knows how.

Your mom can read the story you wrote.

There might be one typo in your whole book. Maybe. And everyone complains about that one.

3. Everyone around you reads.

Your parents read. Your teacher reads. Your lunch lady reads. Your big sister reads. They read the same way you read.

You are expected to learn to read.

You're told that it's normal to learn to read.

4. You get help when you need it.

If you're having trouble reading, adults act as if this is a problem. You are expected to take extra classes, to practice, and to get help until you can read well.

If you can't read, you are called illiterate. You are not given audiobooks. You are taught to read (one hopes). If you don't know how to write, you are expected to practice and learn to write correctly.

To get a good job that pays a decent wage, you have to be able to read well, write well, and use computers. None of that is considered weird.

5. You learn current technology.

Your school has computers, and you learn to use them. You are taught to type, and you are taught to read on a screen that displays thousands of words at a time. You learn to scan for information, because your class moves quickly.

6. You don't get a pass.

You are expected to keep up with the class. You don't get a free pass not to keep up. You don't get to be lazy just because you're a print reader. After all, reading print is normal. Everyone knows it's completely doable, so why should you get to slough off?

You have all the materials you need and all the tools you need. You can't make excuses, because you have the book you need for the assignment and the pencil or the keyboard you need for your work. The teacher loaded and set up the software your class uses, and he knows how to use it.

7. You know you'll use print all your life.

You fully expect that you will grow up, get a job, pay bills, and become a contributing member of society. You know you will read and write print as you do all of these things.

8. *You read math.*

If your teachers did not teach you to read and write the language of printed math in school, your parents would throw a holy, hell-raising, fire-breathing, sue-the-school-for-a-zillion-dollars tantrum. And the community would support them. The school would be put up for review by the state.

If the teachers did not write math code, they would be fired. Period, the end.

And no one would be surprised.

9. *Nobody gushes over your reading ability.*

Nobody tells you they saw some print on a box of Band-Aids and how cool that is. Nobody tells you that you literally deserve a medal for learning how to read.

Because everybody reads!

You don't give yourself pats on the back for using a computer at the age of seventeen.

Everyone uses a computer at age seventeen!

Technology is normal for you.

10. *You get all the information in class if you bother to pay attention.*

A print reader of typical ability and average intelligence can get all the information presented in the classroom. All the stuff on the overhead. All the stuff in every book. All the stuff on the wall. All the lunch menus. All the recess schedules. All the toy names.

And for all that, nobody thinks to be grateful.

A Few Last Comments about Braille

1. *Reading Braille is normal for blind kids.*

For blind and low-vision kids, Braille is the normal way to read. The tools they use are normal. Reading is normal.

Having Braille on the elevator is normal.

2. *Reading Braille is not hard.*

Reading Braille by touch is not hard.

READING BRAILLE BY TOUCH IS NOT HARD.

Reading Braille is NOT HARD.

NOT HARD.

Many Braille readers are slow because of all the things listed above that happened when they were learning it.

BRAILLE IS NOT HARD.

3. *You can read Braille fast.*

Good Braille readers can match print readers for speed.

(Not many do ... see above.)

A good Braille reader can read ten thousand pages in a couple of weeks. (Not many do ... see above.)

4. *Braille is not becoming obsolete.*

There are Braille displays for computers. There are Braille embossers. There are Braille transcribers looking for work. There are more Braille books than ever before. There are computers that transcribe books more accurately than ever before.

There are blind people who need to be able to read.

There are people who need to read pill bottles. And bills. And recipes. And blog posts. And books. And textbooks. And math books. And elevator signs. And hallway signs. And foreign languages. And CD covers. And they need to see how names are spelled.

There are deaf-blind people who use Braille to communicate *everything!*

Since the early 1800s when Louis Braille brought the idea of a quick, dot-based tactile method of reading and writing to his school in France, there have been naysayers. In the beginning people said that Braille wouldn't work. A separate code that sighted people couldn't read would never be widely used.

Blind people used Braille anyway, because for the first time, they could write for themselves. Braille gave them voices. They could read what they wrote.

When Braille came to America, it had naysayers. People said it was too expensive to produce. They said there would never be enough books.

Blind people used Braille anyway. They made their own books. They hired people to learn Braille and transcribe it. They raised funds.

As Braille enters the modern century, it has its naysayers. They say it's becoming obsolete because of technology. They say it's clunky and outdated.

Blind people keep using it anyway. We use Braille with technology. We use it to learn to spell, and we use it to jot notes. We delight in the thrill of opening a real, paper book and feeling the magical constellations under our fingers as words and stories come to life.

5. Then what is the problem?

See if you can figure it out.

I can hear what you're thinking: "But Braille is different from print."

Obviously Braille and print aren't the same, but they're not as different as they seem to non-Braille readers. I read both. I read Braille by touch. I read print (sometimes, under the right conditions).

"But I'm a blind person, and I don't read Braille well. I hardly read it at all."

Why not? Is it lack of desire, lack of support, lack of encouragement? (I'm not talking about people with multiple disabilities, cognitive impairments, or nerve damage in their fingers.) If it's lack of desire, I accept that. You may prefer to use audio, magnification, or other reading methods. But if you dig deep into your reasons, and it's due only to shame or lack of good instruction, I feel that those reasons should not exist. We shouldn't be ashamed to read! We should not be left unsupported when the rest of our peers have a way to read that fits their needs and frees them for a life full of options.

"But I teach Braille, and what you describe is impossible."

Is it?

See if you can do something about it.

Please.

Because if blind and low-vision kids got the support their average sighted counterparts get in learning to read, they would not face a 70 percent unemployment rate. There might still be workplace discrimination, but I'd be willing to bet there would be more employed blind folks than there are today!

I wanted to write "That would be amazing," but I realized that isn't quite accurate. *Amazing* implies something above and beyond the norm. It implies something unexpected. It implies something to be marveled at. Reading isn't something to be marveled at; it's something that should be expected, that should be normal. It's basic, like adequate clothing or nutrition. It's the foundation of every other form of education.

So, instead of "amazing," I write: "It would finally be what kids deserve. It would be just. It wouldn't level the playing field, but it would be a start."

As appeared on the blog of the National Federation of the Blind (Future Reflections, Winter 2016): <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/fr/fr35/1/fr350110.htm>

TED & TEDx Explained

TEDx is an international community that organizes TED-style events anywhere and everywhere -- celebrating locally-driven ideas and elevating them to a global stage. TEDx events are produced independently of TED conferences, each event curates speakers on their own, but based on TED's format and rules.

I'm so glad to finally see the videos posted on YouTube and be able to share this info with you all. I hope you find it as amazing and inspiring as my husband and I did.

Throughout the entire day, 100 inmates interacted freely with another 200 people from outside the prison. These 200 people consisted of billionaires, actors, congressmen, senators, and other special guests.

This was truly one of those once in a life time opportunities that has made a huge positive impact on my life. I was so honored that the inmates considered us special enough to be a part of the day. I can only hope that as you watch these videos you are able to feel even the smallest amount of emotion and positive energy that filled the room that day.

There are some very powerful speakers and lots of great pictures.

Several of the gentlemen that were in the braille program when I was working with ATPC as the prison braille program instructor at Ironwood were part of this presentation.

The following link is to a speech about the braille program at Ironwood Prison.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy7_MVCRFbQ&index=13&list=PLsRNoUx8w3rO2KReY8AxvDCiKyv6R-seR

For more information about the braille program at Ironwood Prison, contact:

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The Library of Congress announces winners of the 2015 Best Practices in Literacy Awards

Congratulations to the Men with a Message braille program at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Facility in Delaware! When the winners of the 2015 Library of Congress Literacy Awards were announced in October 2015, the Men with a Message program was among 17 organizations honored for effectiveness in promoting literacy.

Matthew Tseronis of the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired proudly reports that the braille program in Smyrna was chosen from applications received from 22 US states and 24 countries! The group was recognized for their reading promotion work in the Best Practices Award category of "Providing Access to Readers with Physical Disabilities."

The complete report of the Library of Congress review of outstanding work in the field of literacy is available on line at the Center for the Book (<http://www.read.gov/documents/BestPractices2015.pdf>). It highlights the outstanding work of each of 3 organizations that captured a monetary prize, as well as all 5 of the Best Practices Award categories and those winners. The two pages of this document which describe the Best Practices category and recognize the Men with the Message are attached

For additional information about this program of the National Prison Braille Network, please contact:

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Providing Access to Readers with Physical Disabilities

Physical disabilities can present unique challenges for readers. These range from difficulty understanding written syntax when deaf or hard of hearing learners are first starting to read to a lack of accessible college-level texts for blind or visually impaired students and professionals. ... Readers who are blind or visually impaired [also] face ongoing difficulties with reading. One of the most formidable of these is the lack of accessible print material. Blind readers need books that have been encoded into braille or audio formats, while those with partial visual impairment may need large-print text. This need is particularly acute when a school textbook or professional article does not exist in any of these formats, since the reader cannot simply select another text.

The **Men with a Message Braille Program** transcribes written and visual material into formats that are accessible to readers with visual impairments. The program is a collaboration between the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Division for the Visually Impaired and the Delaware Department of Corrections. Eleven residents of the James T. Vaughn Correctional Facility spend hours each day creating materials for the residents of Delaware and, through the American Printing House, the nation. Each participant has earned his Literary Braille Certification and will soon be certified in the new Unified English Braille Code, adopted in 2012. Several have gone beyond this achievement and obtained advanced certifications to translate math and science texts or written music. These specialty qualifications allow for the translation of materials that range from elementary science texts up to advanced music theory. Visually impaired readers can request the translation of materials through schools or state agencies. This means that they are not limited in their reading selection to material that is already translated into braille or a large-print format, but can access the texts that they are interested in reading, opening all subject areas to them. Past requests have included, among many other items, worksheets and textbooks used by K–12 students in mainstream classrooms, allowing them to learn alongside their sighted peers; poetry and plays; and religious texts used for worship. The common factor among all of these materials is that they would not be available to visually impaired readers without the translations.



he Best Practices publication and related programming, such as symposia and webcasts, have emerged as core components of the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program.

Highlighting both research-validated practices and concrete implementations of these practices demonstrates how literacy promotion groups have successfully applied theory in a real-world context. These solutions provide a model for organizations seeking to create programs that use evidence-based practice to promote literacy.

Five practices are presented here. Each is illustrated by profiles of two or three organizations that have successfully used the practice to enhance and focus their literacy promotion activities. The five practices are: working with government policymakers; creating a community of literacy; selecting appropriate language of instruction; literacy in service of social goals; and providing access to readers with physical disabilities. They were selected in consultation with the Literacy Awards Advisory Board to reflect methods of addressing a range of factors that lead to low literacy, from a need for national advocacy to a lack of qualified instructors.

The 14 organizations profiled here are effectively applying these practices, often in new and creative ways. They are examples of how a program can successfully use evidence-based practice to enhance the promotion of literacy and reading.



MEN WITH A MESSAGE



MEN WITH A MESSAGE

LOCATION:
Smyrna, Delaware

SERVICE AREA:
Delaware

POPULATION SERVED:
Blind and visually
impaired readers

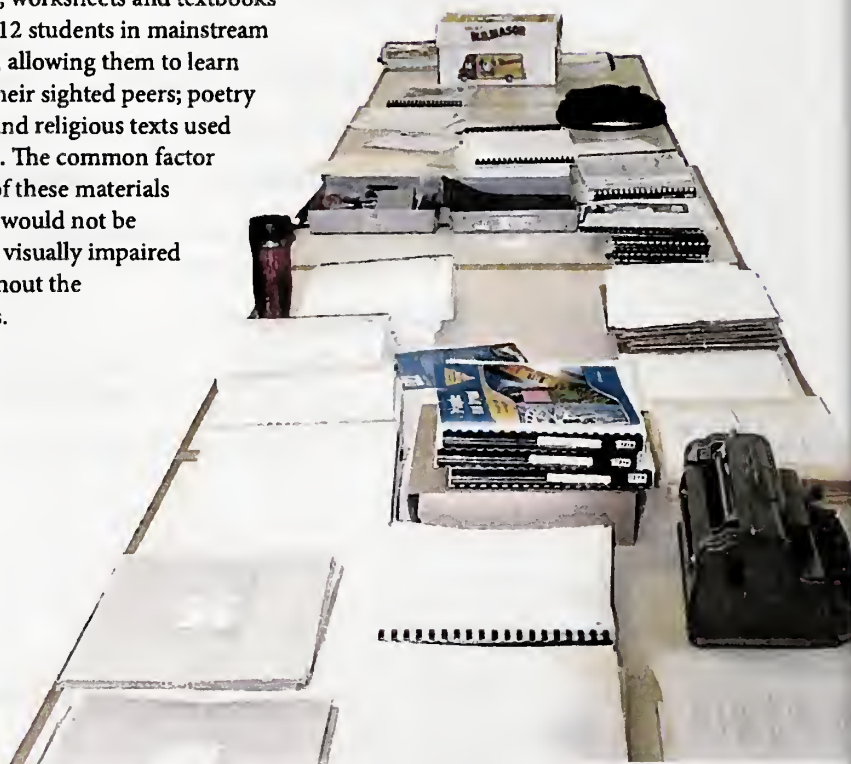
SCOPE:
300,000+ pages
translated

FOUNDED:
1989

The Men with a Message Braille Program transcribes written and visual material into formats that are accessible to readers with visual impairments. The program is a collaboration between the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Division for the Visually Impaired and the Delaware Department of Corrections. Eleven residents of the James T. Vaughn Correctional Facility spend hours each day creating materials for the residents of Delaware and, through the American Printing House, the nation.

Each participant has earned his Literary Braille Certification and will soon be certified in the new Unified English Braille Code, adopted in 2012. Several have gone beyond this achievement and obtained advanced certifications to translate math and science texts or written music. These specialty qualifications allow for the translation of materials that range from elementary science texts up to advanced music theory.

Visually impaired readers can request the translation of materials through schools or state agencies. This means that they are not limited in their reading selection to material that is already translated into braille or a large-print format, but can access the texts that they are interested in reading, opening all subject areas to them. Past requests have included, among many other items, worksheets and textbooks used by K-12 students in mainstream classrooms, allowing them to learn alongside their sighted peers; poetry and plays; and religious texts used for worship. The common factor among all of these materials is that they would not be available to visually impaired readers without the translations.



Georgia inmates honored for braille transcription program

BY KATHERINE SHEPHERD THURSDAY, MARCH 24TH 2016

<http://wgxa.tv/news/local/georgia-inmates-honored-for-braille-transcription-program>



A group of prisoners were honored for translating books into braille./(WGXA)

A group of prisoners received recognition Thursday for helping to bring stories and textbooks to life for the blind.

The governor's wife First Lady Sandra Deal [at left in photo] personally thanked members of the Central State Prison Braille Transcribers Program in Macon.

The inmates take normal books and create braille books with them in order for the blind to be able to read them. The program makes a difference for inmates too.

"As I learned braille and as I got deeper into the program it taught me to understand the difficulties and the challenges that the visually impaired face," said Elmer Hamilton, a certified braille transcriber. "It's been a privilege and an honor to become a part of something much bigger than I ever hoped for or imagined."

Many of the books the team transcribed to braille are textbooks and reading books for young students.

For more information contact:

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Inmate Braille experts save Idaho money, give something back

BY ANNA WEBB

awebb@idahostatesman.com

Idaho Statesman: July 4, 2016

Read more here: <http://www.idahostatesman.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/helping-works/article87580947.html#storylink=cpy>



Inmates at work transcribing Braille. The program teaches skills for inmates, while saving the state money and making educational materials and more available to Idahoans who are blind or visually impaired. Idaho Department of Correction

PROGRAM CONTACTS

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Inmates at Idaho's prison facilities south of Boise have a long tradition of giving back to the community, channeling their time behind bars into good works that help people and animals.

Programs, each of which the Idaho Statesman has featured in the past, include the annual [farm project](#) that has produced thousands of pounds of produce for the Idaho Foodbank, the [Inmate Dog Alliance Project of Idaho](#), a partnership with the Idaho Humane Society that works with shelter dogs to make them more adoptable, and an in-house [knitting and crochet project](#) that provides blankets, baby items and more for local hospitals as well as sweaters for shelter dogs. Here's another.

The Braille Program at the Idaho State Correctional Center is one of just 35 such programs in the U.S. Inmates learn Braille, then transcribe textbooks, literature, sheet music, even maps and math and science graphics for use by students at Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind, the Boise School District and other projects for the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The transcription program has operated since 2011.

Currently, 17 inmates are working as certified Braille transcribers. Four more inmates are working toward certification.

Of the 49 inmates who have become certified since 2011, only two have returned to prison.

“This is an example of a prison program that actually saves taxpayers money,” said Idaho Department of Correction director Kevin Kempf. “By transcribing things like textbooks, standardized tests and voting material, these inmates have saved the State of Idaho about \$2.7 million since the program started.”

But the biggest value of transcription may be increasing access to material for Idahoans who might not be able to use and enjoy it otherwise.

“It’s about accessibility,” said Brian Darcy, administrator for the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind. [and APH EOT]

The agency has its own Braille transcription production center to produce educational material for students in public schools and the agency’s own programs.

“But we can’t keep up. We use the Idaho State Correctional Center often,” he said, adding that the prison program has produced around 55,000 pages of transcribed Braille for IESDB.

Blind and visually impaired students at the university level rely on the Nemeth Code, a Braille code for mathematics and science notation that allows students to study complex math, like calculus and other subjects. There are very few Braille transcribers who know Nemeth Code, said Darcy. One is in the prison program.

“People think that with technology the use of print for the blind or visually impaired is gone. But it’s not, you still have to have those skills,” said Darcy.

In addition, transcribers have learned to repair manual Braillewriters. Without this local service, people who use the writers would have to ship them out of state for repairs, said Darcy.

Marshall Bautista, an instructor who oversees the transcription program, said that while a few inmates may work on Braille just to pass the time, they’re in the minority.

“Probably most see it as a way to give back to the community. There is a passion and an investment put into the work that they do,” said Bautista.



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for the Blind, Inc.



NPBN
National Prison
Braille Network

**16th Annual
National Prison Braille Forum**

Wednesday, October 5, 2016
Hyatt Regency Downtown Louisville, North Ballroom
Agenda

HVI783

.N734

2016

Working the Network

7:30 am Continental breakfast, networking

8:15 Video: TED Talk: "I Have a Plan"

8:25 **Welcome**

Nancy Lacewell

Network Business

"Working the Network"

Becky Snider

Around the room introductions

Jeremy Ockerman

National Prison Braille Network update

Becky Snider

Standard Occupational Classifications

Nancy Lacewell

Introduce stipend recipients

Dorinda Rife

Photography, social media

Rob Guillen

KCIW tour on Thursday

Rob Guillen

Jayma Hawkins

Nancy Lacewell

- 9:00 **BrailleBlaster Update**
Jane Thompson
- 9:15 **UEB implementation Panel, Q&A, Group Discussion**
Jayma Hawkins, Facilitator
Jeremy Ockerman
Cathy Senft-Graves
Leslie Durst
- 10:00 **Network updates**
 - Delaware: Men with a Message
Matt Tseronis, Annie Lattanzi
 - Others
- 10:10 Video: Georgia Braille Transcribers (A)
- 10:15 **Break and networking**
- 10:30 **Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program (BTAP)**

Pilot initiative report (FY2015 and FY2016)
Gary Mudd

Sustainability plan
Cecilia Peredo

FY2017 Call for Applications
Nancy Lacewell

Apprenticeship experience
Howard Parker
Terri Fox
- 11:15 **Network updates**
 - Kentucky: "Building a network"
Debbey Adams
 - Others
- 11:25 Video: Georgia Braille Transcribers (B)
- 11:30 **Lunch and networking**
- 1:00 **"From Beyond the Walls"**
John Romeo, Facilitator
Delores Billman
Cindy Olmstead
Guy Toles

- 1:30 **Special Presentation**
- 2:00 **Panel of prison braille program alumni:**
***Advice to others preparing for release and
successful transition as a transcriber***
 Gary Mudd, Facilitator
 Howard Parker, DE
 Terri Fox, WA
 Debbey Adams, VA
 John Romeo, IA
- 2:40 Video: New York Daily News
- 2:45 **Break and networking**
- 3:00 **The Future of Braille**
 Gary Mudd
 Larry Skutchan
- New APH technology products demonstration**
 Orbit Reader 20 – refreshable braille
 Graphiti – digital tactile graphics
 Larry Skutchan
- 3:45 **Network updates**
 - Kentucky: KCI Braille Services
 Denise Walls
 - Others
- 4:00 **Group discussion:**
 Critical issues facing prison braille programs
- 4:50 Video: Braille Tales and KCI Braille Services
- 5:00 **Adjourn**

*Thank you for participating in the
2016 National Prison Braille Forum.*

*Mark your calendars to join us for the 17th annual Forum on
Wednesday, October 11, 2017*

2016 National Prison Braille Forum

Registration as of September 30, 2016

63 people from 20 states

State Order

**Indicates those who are cleared for the tour of
KCI Braille Services on Thursday, October 6.*

Arkansas

Cindy Wilkinson	AR School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
*Chris Jones	AR School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

California

Milton Goddard	Southern California
*Grant Horrocks	CTEBVI (California Transcribers and Educators of the BVI)
Peggy Schuetz	Transcribing Mariners
Vanessa Stenz	Transcribing Mariners

Colorado

*Jim Olson	CO Instructional Materials Center
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Connecticut

*Nancy Mothersele	Dept. of Rehab. Services/Bureau of Education & Services for the Blind in the State of CT
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Delaware

*Annie Lattanzi	DE Division for the Visually Impaired
*Matthew Tseronis	DE Division for the Visually Impaired

Georgia

Carson Cochran	GA Dept. of Education – Instructional Materials Center
Patrick Fraser	GA Tech - AMAC Accessibility Solutions and Research Center
Tracy Gaines	CTEBVI (California Transcribers and Educators of the BVI)
*Brooke Lloyd	Wheeler Correctional
Michael Silverman	GA Dept. of Education – Instructional Materials Center
*Guy Toles	GA Tech - AMAC Accessibility Solutions and Research Center
*Rebecca Viggiano	GA Tech - AMAC Accessibility Solutions and Research Center
Raminta Zebrauskas	GA Tech - AMAC Accessibility Solutions and Research Center

Indiana

Leslie Durst	IN Educational Resource Center
Deb Krise	Miami Accessible Media Project (MAMP)
Betsy Scott	IN Educational Resource Center: Braille Project

Iowa

*John Romeo Full Cell Braille (Owner) & IA Workforce Development

Kentucky

Debbey Adams APH
Vicki Buns APH
Terri Fox BTAP
Justin Gardner APH
*Rob Guillen APH
*Jayma Hawkins APH
*Deidre Hemm APH
*Ricky Irvine APH
*Nancy Lacewell APH
*Jeremy Ockerman APH
*Hannah Ozmun APH
Howard Parker II APH
Cecilia Peredo APH
Gary Mudd APH
Dorinda Rife APH
Steve Schoch Kentucky Correctional Industries
Cathy Senft-Graves APH
Larry Skutchan APH
Becky Snider APH
Jane Thompson APH
Denise Walls Kentucky Correctional Industries

Michigan

*Robert Beaton MI Dept. of Education, Instructional Materials Center
Cindy Olmstead MI Braille Transcribing Fund (MBTF)

Montana

*Janice Stromberg Corrections Corporation of America

New Mexico

*Laura Miyoshi NM School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
*Cheryl Petree NM School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Ohio

Samuel Foulkes Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Saul Garza Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Paula Mauro OCALI (OH Center for Autism and Low Incidence)

Oklahoma

Cristin Lockwood CTEBVI & Transcribing Mariners

Oregon

Sharon von See Tech Adapt Accessible Media Center

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Jill Ischinger South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind

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*Michael Nash TRICOR
*Fred Roach TRICOR
Kathy Segers TN School for the Blind

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*Delores Billman TX Dept. of Criminal Justice - Mountain View Unit
*Kirstie Legerski TX Dept. of Criminal Justice – Manufacturing & Logistics
Diane Spence Region 4 Education Service Center
Bob Walling Transcribing Mariners

Wisconsin

*Kurt Pamperin Oshkosh Correctional Institution

Wyoming

*Shari Zwiebel WY Brand Industries (WBI) Braille

2016 National Prison Braille Forum



American Printing House
for the Blind, Inc.

October 5, 2016
Roster of Participants
* *APH Ex Officio Trustee*



63 participants from 20 states

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Prison Braille Programs Across the United States
38 programs in 28 states
(known to be operating as of September 30, 2016)

<u>State/Program</u>	<u>Operated by</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Inmates/ Transcribers</u>
Arizona				
1. Arizona Department of Corrections (Florence Eyman)	Fndn. for Blind	1995	male	8/8
2. Arizona Department of Corrections (Florence South)	Fndn. for Blind	1995	male	8/8
3. Arizona State Prison (Kingman/Huachuca)	Fndn. for Blind/GEO	2016	male	
Arkansas				
4. Wrightsville Correctional Facility Braille Unit (Wrightsville)	school for the blind	1984	male	3/3
California				
5. Avenal State Prison (Avenal)	community college	2005	male	11/3
6. California Medical Facility (Vacaville)	nonprofit corp.	1960	male	14/3
7. Folsom State Prison (Folsom)	industries	1989	male	17/16
8. Ironwood State Prison (Blythe)	community college	2008	male	24/12
9. Valley State Prison (Chowchilla)	volunteer/education	2015	male	30/1
Colorado				
10. Kit Carson Corrections Center (Burlington)	school f/t blind	2013	male	rebuilding
Connecticut				
11. Cheshire State Prison (Cheshire)	corrections industries	1990	male	8/8
12. Enfield Correctional Institution (Enfield)	correction education	2011	male	8/8
Delaware				
13. James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (Smyrna)	DE DVI & Corrections	1989	male	11/10
Georgia				
14. Central State Prison (Macon)	education	2003	male	19/18
15. Wheeler Correctional Facility (Alamo)	corrections corp/program	2014	male	
Idaho				
16. Idaho Correctional Center (Boise)	education	2001	male	15/10
Indiana				
17. Miami Correctional Facility (Bunker Hill)	education & industries	2008	male	37/10

<u>State/Program</u>	<u>Operated by</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>#Inmates/ Transcribers</u>
Iowa				
18. Anamosa State Penitentiary (Anamosa)	industries	1992	male	
Kentucky				
19. Federal Medical Center-Lexington (Lexington)	education	1995	male/female	25/4
20. KY Correctional Institution for Women (Pewee Valley)	industries	2000	female	16/15
Michigan				
21. G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility (Jackson)	nonprofit corp.	1962	male	45/29
Missouri				
22. Jefferson City Correctional Center (Jefferson City)	MO Rehab Svcs f/t Blind	1975	male	19/15
Montana				
23. Crossroads Correctional Facility (Shelby)	corrections corp	2015	male	
Nebraska				
24. Nebraska State Penitentiary (Lincoln)	industries	1980	male	36/14
Nevada				
25. Southern Desert Correctional Center (Indian Springs)	ed. & Clark Co. Adult Ed	1988	male	
New Mexico				
26. Lea County Correctional Facilities (Hobbs)		2015	male	40
North Carolina				
27. Scotland Correctional Institution (Laurinburg)	industries	2011	male	21/21
Ohio				
28. Grafton Correctional Institution (Grafton)	industries	1991	male	renegotiating
Oklahoma				
29. Davis Correctional Facility (Holdenville)	education/vocation	2016	male	TBD
Pennsylvania				
30. SCI Cambridge Springs (Cambridge Springs)	ed.-Meadville Lions Club	1994	female	10/4
South Carolina				
31. Leath Correctional Facility (Greenwood)	education	2002	female	13/13

<u>State/Program</u>	<u>Operated by</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Transcribers #Inmates/</u>
South Dakota				
32. South Dakota State Penitentiary (Sioux Falls)	industries	1983	male	34/12
Texas				
33. TDCJ Mtn View Unit Braille/Computer Recovery Facility-Gatesville	education & industries	1999	female	92
Virginia				
34. Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women (Troy)	education	2008	female	20/8
Washington				
35. Washington Corrections Center for Women (Gig Harbor)	school for the blind	1997	female	16/16
Wisconsin				
36. Oshkosh Correctional Institution (Oshkosh)	education	1997	male	20/18
Wyoming				
37. Wyoming Medium Correctional Institution (Torrington)	industries	2010	male	9/8
38. Wyoming State Penitentiary (Rawlins)	industries	2016	male	TBD

Professionals in these states have expressed an interest in starting a braille program:

Connecticut: David A. Brown, CT Dept. of Correction (Wethersfield?), 2016

Kansas: Donna Shetler, Brothers in Blue, Lansing Correctional, 2016

Louisiana: EOT Robin King, LA Dept. of Education & School for the Visually Impaired, 2013; Cindy Robinson, Teacher of VI, Oct. 2014

Maine: Michael Shannon, ME Correctional Center (Windham), 2013

Minnesota: EOT Kristen Oien, MN Dept. of Education & Marcie Koetke, MN Dept. of Corrections, 2014

Montana: Sharon Sager, MT Correctional Enterprises & Steve Fugate, MT School f/t Def & Blind, 2013; Janice Stromberg, Crossroads Correctional Center, 2015

New Mexico: Dep. Warden Pete Perez, Western New Mexico Correctional, 2013; Warden Jeff Wrigley, Lea Co. Correctional Facility, 2014

New Hampshire: Mary Lane, NH Dept. of Education (Concord), 2016

New Jersey: Andrea McChristian (former Yale intern), NJ Institute for Social Justice, 2016

New York: EOT Barbara Lemen (2015)

Tennessee: Ralph Thompson (brother-in-law of Gary Mudd, APH Vice President for Public Affairs), 2014; Fred Roach, TRICOR, 2016

Utah: Hollie Murdock, Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, 2014

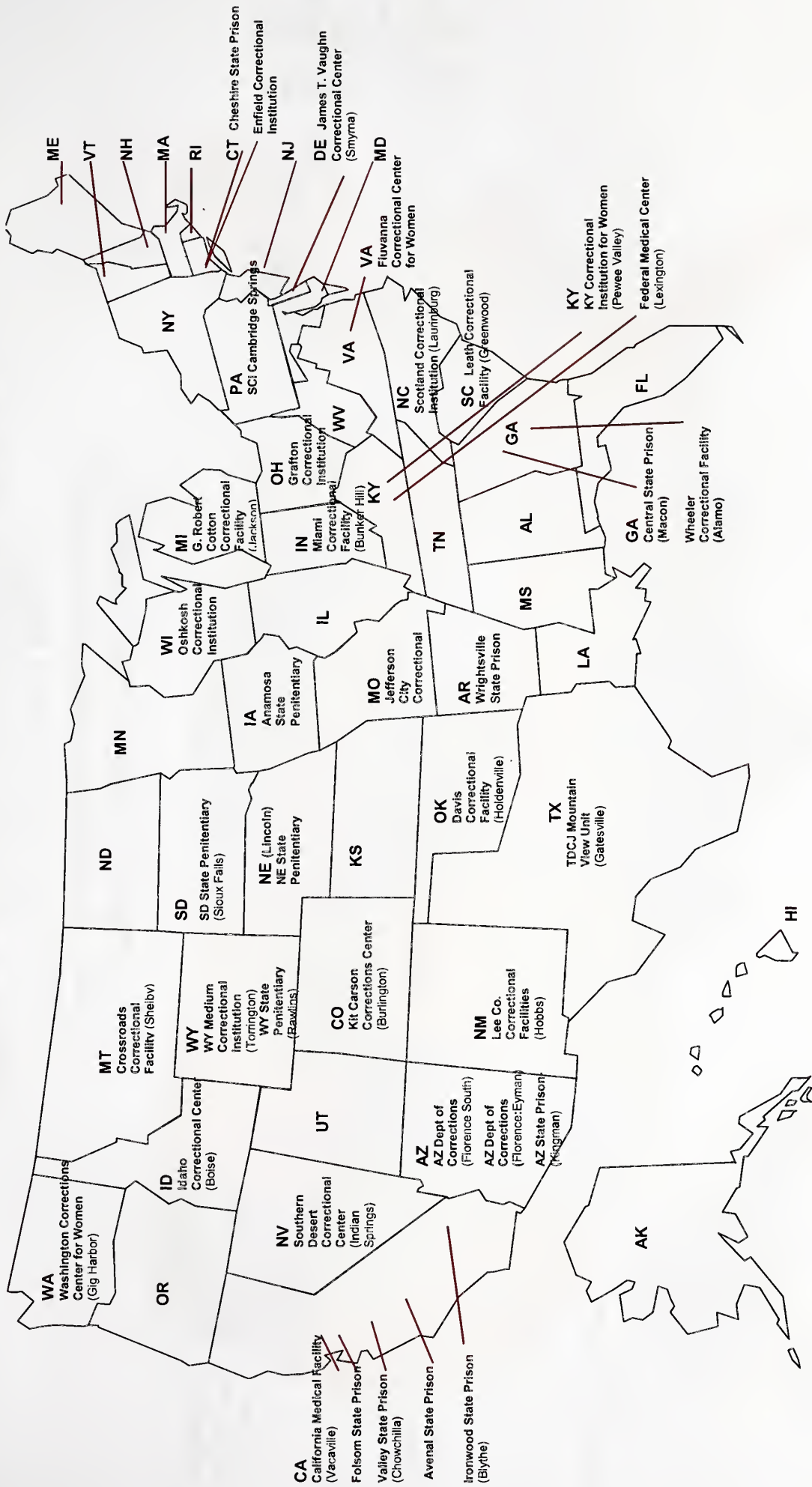
Braille programs have ceased operations in these states/institutions:

Kansas (Elsworth): Elsworth Correctional Institution-related service (2014)
Massachusetts (Norfolk): Bay State Correctional Center (2014)
Nebraska (NE Correctional Center for Women-York (2014)
New York (Napanoch): Eastern New York Correctional (2014)
Ohio (Cleveland): **Northeast Reintegration Center** (Aug. 2016)
Pennsylvania (Doylestown): Bucks Co. Correctional Facility-related service (2014)
West Virginia (Huttonsville): Huttonsville Correctional Facility (2015)

Prison Braille Programs

Across the United States

38 programs in 28 states

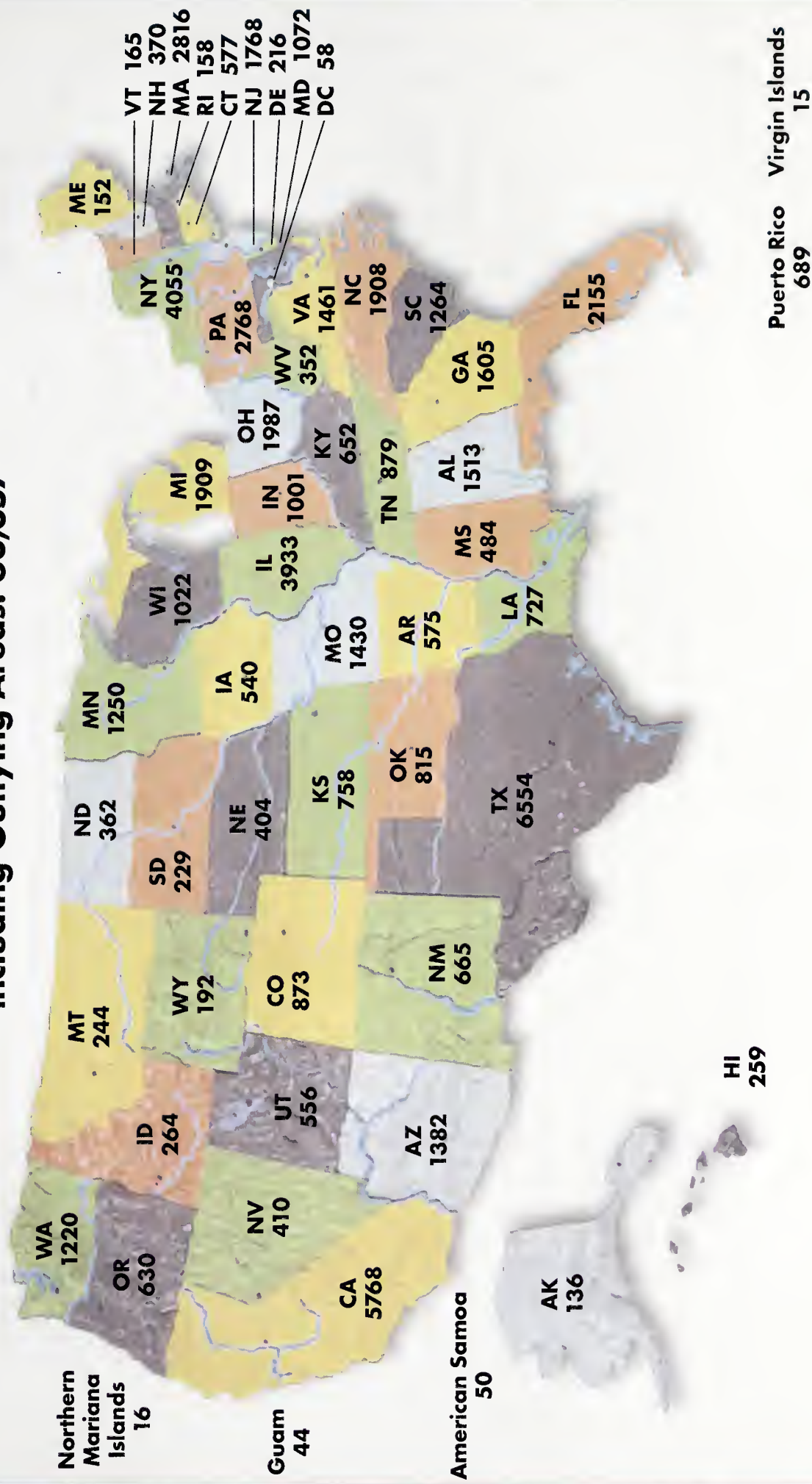


Act to Promote the Education of the Blind of 1879

Number of Blind and Visually Impaired Students Registered in the Federal Quota Program

As of January 2016

Total Students in the United States,
including Outlying Areas: 63,357



About the Federal Quota Program

The Federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind was passed by Congress in 1879 to provide adapted educational materials to eligible students working at less than college level who meet the definition of blindness. An annual registration of eligible students determines a per-capita amount of money designated for the purchase of educational materials produced by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). These funds are credited to Federal Quota accounts, which are maintained and administered by APH and its Ex Officio Trustees (EOTs) throughout the country and outlying areas.

APH is responsible for the overall administration of this law, which is accomplished through a network of professionals designated as EOTs. These professionals are the heads of residential schools for the blind; chief state school officers of each state department of education; heads of private, nonprofit schools for the blind; heads of programs for students who are multiply disabled; and heads of rehabilitation agencies. EOTs in each state and outlying area are legally entrusted with the administration of the Federal Quota Program for students within their systems. Registration of students and all orders for materials to be purchased with Federal Quota funds must be directed through EOTs.

For over 130 years, the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind has been affecting positive change in the lives of Americans who are visually impaired. Through materials that range from accessible books to fine motor development materials, from braille writing equipment to talking computer products and digital technology, APH and the Act address the specific learning needs that a vision loss creates.

The purpose of the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind is to place the most appropriate educational aids, tools, and supplies in the hands and lives of every student with vision loss below college level. APH works in partnership with the federal government to help these students achieve in the classroom and succeed in the workplace.



American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.

800.223.1839 • info@aph.org • www.aph.org

2016 National Prison Braille Forum

Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program

BTAP



BRAILLE TRANSCRIBER APPRENTICE PROGRAM BTAP

PILOT INITIATIVE
FY2015-FY2016

BTAP PARTICIPANTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Apprenticeship</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
• Jose Tapia (GA)	March 2015 – May 2015	Dropped out of BTAP
• Jason Wilson (GA)	May 2015 – September 2015	APH Lead Braille Transcriber
• Howard R. Parker II (DE)	February 2016 – June 2016	APH Accessible Media Editor
• Terri Fox (WA)	May 2016 – August 2016	Independent Transcriber

- 71 Total applicants – current and future

CERTIFIED BRAILLE TRANSCRIBERS CONTINUING THAT WORK FOLLOWING RELEASE FROM PRISON 2011-2014

- Certified brailists released from prison 310
- Continuing transcription after release 88 28%

BRAILLE CERTIFICATION IMPACT ON RECIDIVISM 2011-2014

- Certified transcribers released from prison 310
- Number who reoffended and returned to prison 15
- Recidivism rate 4.8%

BTAP SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

BRAILLE TRANSCRIBER APPRENTICE PROGRAM

JANUARY – AUGUST, 2016

PARTNERSHIP

- American Printing House for the Blind (Louisville)
- Center for Non-Profit Excellence (Louisville)
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency (California)

OBJECTIVES**Center for Non Profit Excellence**

1. Identify potential sources of funding and self-sustaining practices.
2. Design a 5-year pro forma statement for revenue and expense guidelines.

OBJECTIVES**National Council on Crime and Delinquency**

3. Identify best practices, resources, and potential partners.
4. Identify barriers to program success and propose solutions.
5. Identify federal government officials who can assist with BTAP.
6. Establish guidelines for a successful interface with parole boards and a culture of acceptance for re-entry upon release.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS: FUNDING

- Lack of consistent, dedicated funding for BTAP; dependency on single funding source.
- Unpredictability of parole decisions and time frame for release.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS: FUNDING

- Continued support from APH Board
- Developed a 5-year pro forma statement in which APH financial dependency decreases and support from individuals, private foundations, government grants, and earned income increases.
- Requested the APH Board of Trustees authorize funding beyond one year of operation for BTAP.
- Developed a list of potential funders (foundations).
- Developed a pre/mid/post evaluation to prove program impact to funders.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS: THE OUTSIDE PLAYERS

- Qualified inmates, chosen as apprentices not released for parole
- Corrections officials and parole boards lack an understanding of braille transcription as a viable career option.
- Lack of solidified relationships with corrections officials/professionals needed to share information about the National Prison Braille Network and BTAP, as well as learn more about the challenges of reentry.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS: THE OUTSIDE PLAYERS

- Recruit former offenders who have been recently released from prison and qualify for apprenticeships.
- Go beyond braille transcribers to include proofreaders, tactile graphics developers, and computer code writers.
- Submit a request to the President's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to add the occupation of Braille Transcriber to the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC).
- Gather research about sensitivity training and working with formerly incarcerated people to develop guidelines

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS: OUTSIDE PLAYERS (CONT.)

- Attend conferences, submit relevant articles, and develop partnerships with professionals in the field of corrections, government leaders, and potential funders.
 - Created list of relevant conferences, publishers, workforce development, Small Business Development and corrections professionals.
 - Identified five states to explore more in depth.
 - Began new relationship with Connecticut movers.
 - Inform general public and targeted parole boards/corrections officials about BTAP, Reentry, etc. through media

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS: THE INSIDE PLAYERS

- Lack of staff knowledge and experience in setting up independent braille transcription businesses.
- Lack of full-time staff dedicated to BTAP.
- Apprentices arriving with less training than anticipated in life skills and computer skills.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS: THE INSIDE PLAYERS

- Establish an Advisory Committee or Council under APH governance.
- Increase APH staff time and increase of a period of five years including a Director of the National Prison Braille Network and BTAP
- Work with qualified consultants/committee to create a plan/BTAP curriculum for establishing an independent braille transcription business.
- Explore having apprentices apply for microloans through the Small Business Administration. "SBA Microloans for Reentering Individuals."

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

- Develop a detailed evaluation strategy to collect, analyze, use, and disseminate information about BTAP and about prison braille programs.
- Utilize apprentice surveys: pre-, mid-, and post-apprenticeship.
- Consider working with external evaluator to implement a national evaluation on how prison braille programs operate, their impact on participants, and their link to outcomes (i.e., recidivism)

CAROLINE GLESMANN
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

"...The Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program is an important addition to the landscape of reentry efforts, and growth of this program will likely continue to reap rewards for all parties involved."

KEVIN CONNELLY
CENTER FOR NONPROFIT EXCELLENCE

"...Like other national programs with origins in Louisville such as National Safe Place and the National Center for Family Literacy, the Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program has similar potential to demonstrate and tell a compelling story that reveals a very clear truth: the program changes lives and makes sense."

BRAILLE TRANSCRIBER APPRENTICE PROGRAM (BTAP)

FY2017 Call For Applications

BTAP FY2017 ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must:

- Be affiliated with a prison braille program that is a member of the National Prison Braille Network.
- Have already been released from prison or be eligible for a parole hearing or serve-out by September 30, 2017.

BTAP FY2017 ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must:

- Have earned NLS Literary Braille Certification and at least one advanced certification (Literary Braille Proofreading, Nemeth, Nemeth Proofreading, Textbook Formatting, Music Associate, Music).
- Have gained tactile graphic design and production experience.
- Be committed to pursuing a career in braille transcription.

BTAP FY2017 APPLICATION PROCESS

- All applicants (even those who have previously applied) **must complete an FY2017 BTAP Application Form**. Previous applicants are encouraged to submit new, updated attachments. However, if attachments have been submitted in the past and applicants want the BTAP selection committee to use these attachments, this must be stated on the application form.
- Future applicants – those who would like to participate in BTAP but will not be up for parole or serve-out until after September 30, 2017 – must submit a **BTAP Letter of Intent** as described in BTAP packet materials.

BTAP FY2017 APPLICATION DEADLINE

Friday, December 16, 2016

Although applications will be accepted until July 1, 2017, applicants who submit their materials by Friday, December 16, 2016 will be given preference.

BTAP FY2017

Send applications, letters, and attachments to:

Nancy Lacewell
BTAP Coordinator
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Avenue
Louisville, KY 40206

Questions and requests for application packets:
nlacewell@aph.org 502-550-3300

"... I was welcomed by the mentor that APH assigned to me. She has a background in criminal justice and a heart for helping former criminals become productive members of society. It was her involvement in an aftercare ministry and her willingness to devote her personal time to me that made this arrangement work. For, in addition to making sure I had a place to live, she was also ever available to assist me with the intricacies of learning how to live in a world that I was a stranger to – a mammoth task that she has done very well. And even though I've moved on from BTAP, my mentor's commitment to my transition and success remains intact."

*--Jason Wilson
BTAP Apprentice 2015*

"Without BTAP being there for me I believe my transition back in to society would have been most difficult. Learning how to establish myself as a braille transcriber has been invaluable. Make sure that you continue doing what you're doing for BTAP so that it grows for others."

*--Howard Parker
BTAP Apprentice, 2016*

"I came here with 4 certifications and 7 years of transcription work. However, I had no idea what all went into my work becoming accessible for the visually impaired. I did not know how to access the internet, send email, attach files, how to set up accounts, bid jobs, create invoices, and the list goes on. Transcribing is just a little piece of the whole process. There is no way I could have started a business without this training.

This is what people coming out of prison braille programs need to know."

*--Terri Fox
BTAP Apprentice, 2016*

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